

Accordingly, applicants' claims are entitled to the benefit of the October 09, 1997, filing date of the German priority application. The teaching of *Bronstert et al.* (WO 97/37397) was not published before the priority date to which the present application is entitled, and therefore cannot be deemed to constitute prior art.

In light of the foregoing and the attached and applicants' amendments and remarks presented in the reply dated February 19, 2003 (date of the Certificate of Mailing), the application should now be in condition for allowance. Early action is respectfully solicited.

Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including Extension of Time fees to Deposit Account No. 11.0345. Please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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HBK/BAS